

AUSTRALIA AT THE XXX OLYMPIAD: A SESTET



PROLOGUE

"In the name of all the competitors I promise that we shall take part in these Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules that govern them, committing ourselves to a sport without doping and without drugs, in the true spirit of sportsmanship, for the glory of sport and the honour of our teams."

SARAH STEVENSON - UK TAEKWONDO REPRESENTATIVE

STANZA # 1: THE XXX OLYMPIAD

In the year 2012, more than 10,800 athletes arrived in London for the XXX Olympic Games

Over twelve gruelling days, they gave their peak performances for one or more of 2,300 coveted medals

Only five in every hundred achieved such glory and fame

Each day supervised and marshalled by expert sworn aediles

Commencing with the ceremonial lighting of the Olympic flames

















The names of medallists to be honoured and recorded in never ending chronicles

STANZA # 2: AUSTRALIA'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Numbered tenth in the final medal count

Thirty five precious decorations, earned through years of arduous preparation

| | |  |  |  |  |
|--------------|--|---|---|---|---|
| Rank by Gold | Country | ▼ Gold | Silver | Bronze | Total |
| 1 |  United States of America | 39 | 25 | 26 | 90 |
| 2 |  People's Republic of China | 37 | 24 | 19 | 80 |
| 3 |  Great Britain | 25 | 13 | 14 | 52 |
| 4 |  Russian Federation | 12 | 21 | 23 | 56 |
| 5 |  Republic of Korea | 12 | 7 | 6 | 25 |
| 6 |  Germany | 10 | 16 | 11 | 37 |
| 7 |  France | 8 | 9 | 12 | 29 |
| 8 |  Hungary | 8 | 4 | 3 | 15 |
| 9 |  Italy | 7 | 6 | 6 | 19 |
| 10 |  Australia | 6 | 13 | 10 | 29 |

Sporting performances nothing will ever surmount

Achievements attained to world-wide acclamation

Surpassing the world's best competitors, laying down a worthy account

Honours honestly won, never subject to cancellation

STANZA # 3: GOLD IN WOMEN'S SWIMMING

Eight competing nations in the final heat, separated by less than two seconds

The Dutch Team favourites for the 4x100 metre women's relay

Glory and renown before the whole world beckons

A courageous, determined winning display



The 'Queensland Quartet' winning in just over three and one third minutes without flection

Melanie Schlanger storming home, holding both her Dutch and American challengers at bay

STANZA # 4: GOLD IN TRACK AND FIELD

Winning the 100 metres women's hurdles in Olympic record time



Sally Pearson won in 12.35 seconds, defeating three American challengers,
her only post-match wish, a cheese burger

An athletic victory hard won, taxing and yet sublime

Willed on by millions, indisputably first in the world ranking order

A performance predicated on a long, laborious climb

An occasion of great warmth and ardour.

STANZA # 5: SILVER INSTEAD OF GOLD

By the narrowest of margins, James Magnussen lost gold to Nathan Adrian for the 100 metres men's freestyle swimming final

A single one hundredth of a second separated the two champions, America winning, Australia losing



A strong competitor, James' nick name was *"The Missile"*, his being an assured and confident idol

His close, scanty loss was disheartening and bruising

Disconcerting his feelings and subjecting his hitherto sureness to a humbling bridle

"It hurts", he admitted following the heat, his previous self-assurance disabusing

STANZA # 6: MEDALS AND MEMORIES

410 fine Australian Olympians won 35 medals overall

A 'strike rate' of one in twelve Australian Olympians



A not insignificant haul

A result, if not scintillating, as solid as volcanic obsidian



Much worse fates being possible to befall

In the land of the prime meridian

STANZA # 7: CLOSING CELEBRATIONS

Writing a new chapter of Olympic history that began in ancient Olympia
3,000 years ago

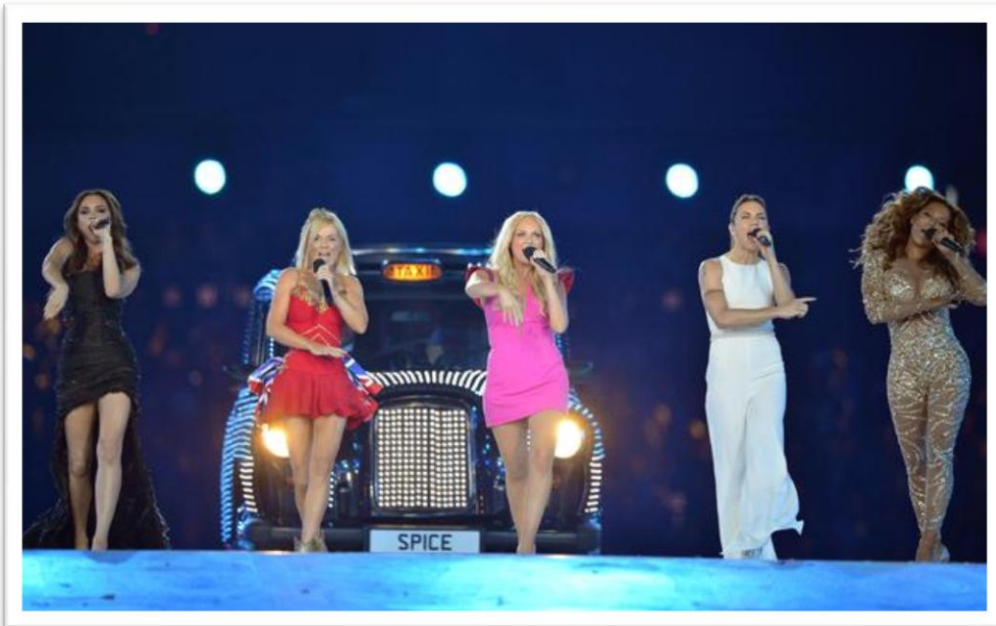
Commitment to fair play, grace in defeat as well as in victory

A triumph of organization, construction and sport, setting the hearts of
millions aglow

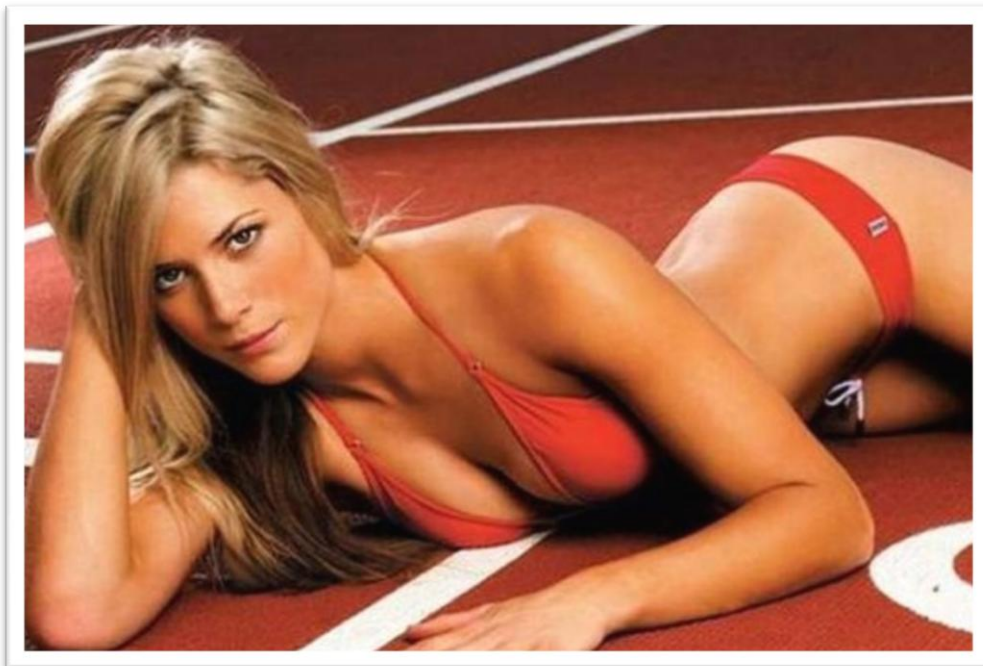
A fulgid, gaudy, bright, glittering competition and celebration, incomparable
in its category



At a cost of eleven and a half billion pounds or more than seventeen billion Australian dollars, it created its own golden glow



204 countries and their 10,820 athletes, each telling, for all time, their particular story



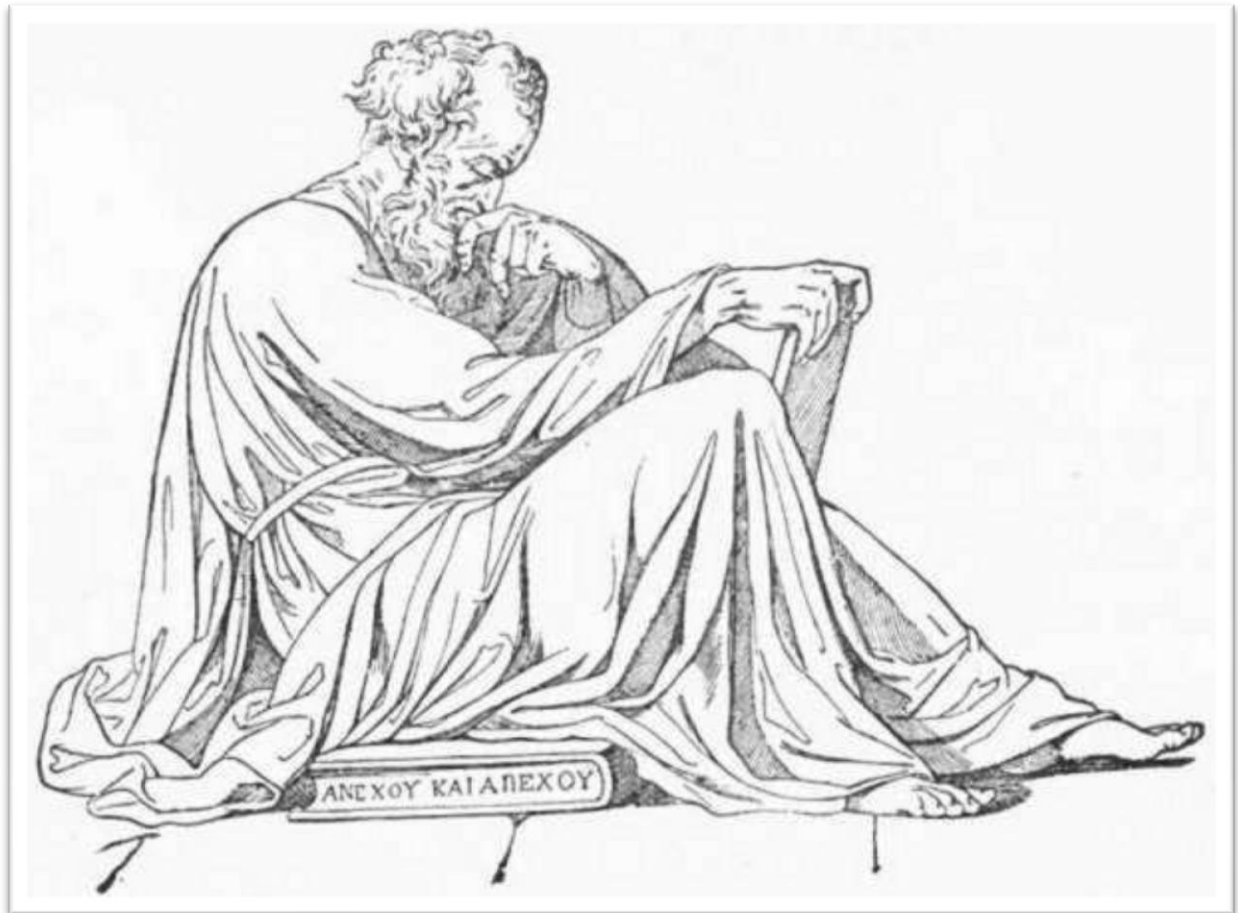
Australian Pole Vaulter Melanie Adams

EPILOGUE

"You would fain be victor at the Olympic Games, you say. Yes, but weigh the conditions, weigh the consequences; then and then only, lay to your hand – if it be for your profit. You must live by rule, submit to diet, abstain from dainty meals, exercise your body perforce at stated hours, in heat or in cold; drink no cold water, nor, may it be, wine. In a word, you must surrender yourself wholly to your trainer, as though to a physician ..."

EPICTETUS [55AD-135AD]

Greek Sage and Philosopher. Born a slave in Phrygia (present day Turkey), he spent his youth in Rome, bonded to Epaphroditus, a wealthy freedman and secretary to Nero. Although crippled in one leg, he eventually gained his freedom, studied under Musonius Rufus and taught philosophy in Rome. In 93 AD, at the age of 38 years, he, along with all other philosophers, was banished from the city on the orders of Emperor Domitian. Epictetus then went to Nicopolis in Epirus, Greece, founding a school of philosophy, where he lived and taught until the end of his life. Reputedly a powerful speaker, many came to hear him teach and Emperor Hadrian befriended him. He lived a simple life with few possessions and died alone at the age of around 80 years. Such was the regard in which he was held, after his death, his lamp was purchased from amongst his belongings for the sum of 3,000 drachmae – this sum being the equivalent of the wages of a skilled labourer in ancient Athens for no less than eight and a quarter years, or, in terms of average weekly earnings in Australia in May 2012, the sum of A\$641,178.40.



**Image of Epictetus, the Stoic Philosopher of both Rome and Nicopolis,
Mid-First Century to Early Second Century AD**